

## Sugar: All Natural ... 15 Calories Per Teaspoon!

### **Sugar Association Board Takes Action to Reorganize and Add Efficiency...Approves Budget Resolution with Contingency Fund and Reformats Board Meeting**

On June 12, the Sugar Association Board met telephonically to review administrative resolutions to allow the organization to function more efficiently as part of the reorganization process. Twenty-one of 23 Board members were present or represented. Charles Baker, VP of Scientific Affairs, was elected Secretary and Treasurer for the Association. In addition, the Board approved a continuing resolution authorizing implementation of the 2003-2004 fiscal year budget until the July 11 Board meeting in Washington, DC. This budget includes a \$200,000 contingency fund for special unbudgeted projects that might come up during the year or one-time expenses.

In other action, the Board voted to re-format their meetings. The three Advisory Committees (Technical Advisory Committee, Public Policy Advisory Committee, and the Public Education Advisory Committee) will meet independent of Board meetings. Instead of being a 2 ½ day meeting, the formal Board meeting will fall within a 24 hour period. There will be some informal functions that occur before the Board meetings, but the actual business segment of the Board meeting will be condensed to around 4 hours. The issue of having both Board meetings in Washington, DC, versus one in DC and a second one somewhere else in the U.S. was tabled for discussion until the July Board meeting.

SAI President Andrew Briscoe briefed the Board on reorganization actions and key issues. Staff changes have provided substantial savings, with administrative cost reductions allowing for the increase funding for key programmatic areas. Key issues presently being addressed by SAI staff includes: 1) getting the present WHO guideline of 10% caloric intake of free (added) sugars withdrawn from official WHO policy; 2) working with other food industry groups striving to get a good balance of doctors nominated to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee; 3) staff completion of the scientific review of fructose/HFCS; and 4) working to expand our scientific base with the creation of an External Scientific Advisory Council consisting of four

doctors to review the science on sugar, propose any new areas for research, and provide outside input and support on an ongoing as-needed basis.

Finally, in an initiative to build stronger food industry relationships, the Sugar Association has met individually with the National Soft Drink Association, the International Food Information Council, the National Food Processors Association, the Chocolate Manufacturers Association, and the Grocery Manufacturers of America. Internationally, we are developing strong networks with the Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre (CEFS) in Brussels, the Sugar Bureau in London, the World Sugar Research Organisation (WSRO) in the UK, and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers/World Association of Beet and Cane Growers in Paris.

A copy of the minutes from the Board meeting is available at <http://www.sugar.org/members/BoardMinutes-June12.pdf> on the "Members Only" section of [www.sugar.org](http://www.sugar.org) (User name: sugarmembers, Password: sucrose03).

### **World Health Organization – Diet and Nutrition Report Under Diverse Third-Party Attacks**

*WHO Front* - Officials from WHO called for a meeting with associations representing multi-national food and beverage industries to gain support for its proposed Global Strategy on diet and physical activity. SAI was invited, but chose not to attend. The WHO news release of this June 17 meeting, available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/releases/2003/pr50/en/>, contains supplemental background information.

The WHO Director General's office was represented by two officials from the WHO noncommunicable diseases division, Drs. Derek Yach and Pekka Puska. Director-General Brundtland was absent. WHO's evaluation of this meeting as "very useful and constructive" contrasts sharply with the "monumental waste of time" appraisal by a representative of the global sugar industry.

Following an opening 1-hour lecture by Dr. Yach, Drs. Yach and Puska left the meeting, and did not return until the industry discussion was nearly complete. Dr. Yach opined that Report 916 is just a report of an advisory committee,

not WHO policy. When questioned about its foundational prominence in the Global Strategy, WHO was unwilling to withdraw the Report and the Strategy as suggested by the food industry representatives.

A slip of the tongue revealed that Drs. Yach and Puska had been meeting concurrently with the head of the G-77 group (coalition of developing countries). It was reported that WHO is not prepared for, and distraught over, the lack of G-77 endorsement of Report 916 within the policy mandates of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The leader of the G-77 is the FAO Ambassador from Thailand, who has been thoroughly briefed about the economic devastation which implementation of the WHO Report proposals would inflict in Thailand.

Another member of SAI's informal international coalition, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, participated in the June 17 meeting. Simultaneously, IFAP issued a press release, available at <http://www.ifap.org/news/presswho.html>, that characterizes the WHO Report as unbalanced and calls on WHO to develop clear guidelines that do not undermine efforts to eliminate world hunger.

**Key Point:** The strategy of working behind the scenes within FAO and other international agri-food groups is starting to reap rewards. G-77 official endorsement of the call for an independent review of the WHO Report is critical, and appears more definite now than in April.

*FAO Front* – SAI's communication with the U.S. delegation to the June 2003 FAO Council meeting was reported in last week's **Sugar E-News**. SAI briefed U.S. delegation member Sharon Kotok on June 16. During the meeting, it became readily apparent that the U.S. delegation is fully aware of the scientific shortcomings and economic oversights of WHO Report and its affiliated Global Strategy. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has used SAI-provided documents to thoroughly educate Federal personnel about the lack of the preponderance of science in the Report. The U.S. delegation assured SAI that it will publicly endorse the FAO's Committee on Agriculture (COAG) call for its independent review of the WHO Report prior to any policy-setting actions by FAO.

DHHS briefed the Canadian delegation to FAO on Friday, June 13 as the foundation to seeking its support of the US endorsement of the independent COAG review. Support of

the COAG review by Canada adds another developed world voice to importance of COAG and the G-77.

**Key Point:** U.S. sugar industry liaison with DHHS is responsible for the engagement of the U.S. delegation in its support of an independent review of WHO Report.

## **Dietary Guidelines 2005 – Advisory Committee Nominations Submitted by SAI**

Earlier E-News articles have highlighted SAI's call for the selection of a more balanced and objective Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) in 2005, and the exceptional engagement of The White House in the Dietary Guidelines 2005 process. In response to a recent *Federal Register* notice, SAI recommended seven internationally acclaimed experts to serve on the 2005 DGAC. A copy of SAI's letter is available at <http://www.sugar.org/members/DGACnominations.pdf>.

The specific areas of expertise requested for representation on the 2005 DGAC was expanded beyond the long-established nutrition research arena. Fields as diverse as pediatrics, exercise science, food safety, food science and technology, public health communication, public policy understanding and statistics were added. SAI's nominees met one or more of these expertise criteria. Two have previous DGAC experience. SAI worked diligently to achieve the nomination of another expert wholly through third-party endorsements.

Experts receiving multiple nominations, particularly from unrelated organizations, are viewed more positively for service on the DGAC. Thus, SAI worked with other institutes and associations to attain multiple nominations for those proposed by SAI. The name of one SAI nominee was submitted by the American College of Sports Medicine as well as an academic Dean. Another SAI nominee was backed by a U.S. Senator. A third nominee is supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A fourth SAI nominee was also supported by the Grocery Manufacturers of America.

**Key Point:** If only one or two of the experts supported by SAI are selected, there will be more balance and objectivity on the 2005 DGAC than previous years.